of the *maidan* to the east of the Public Offices in Trivandrum, and when it gets into working order, it is bound to afford considerable stimulus to the economic advancement of the country. The Government have also decided to take part in the British Empire Exhibition to be held in London in 1924 under the patronage of His Majesty the King Emperor. A committee composed of officials and non-officials, with the Director of Agriculture as the convener, has been constituted to work out the details, and it is proposed to hold a preliminary exhibition in Trivandrum at the time of His Highness the Maha Raja's next birth-day for the final selection of the exhibits to be sent to London. I appeal to you to heartily co-operate with the committee to make the State's participation in the project a complete success.

26. It may here be mentioned in passing that, with a view to encourage local products and manufactures, the Government have issued orders that, in the matter of purchasing stores required for departmental use, heads of departments should prefer Travancore products, provided they satisfy their requirements as regards quality and do not compare unfavourably with foreign products in regard to prices.

27. Geology.—The Department of Geology has been made a section of the Department of Industries with effect from the beginning of the current year. With a view to enable the staff of this section to carry on the work of prospecting for minerals of economic value more effectively, a Bill is being prepared by the Additional Head Sirkar Vakil empowering the staff to enter on private lands, if necessary. A programme of prospecting for and conducting an economic survey of minerals has been drawn up, and the Assistant Geologist has commenced to work at it and give the Chemical Assistant of the department the materials necessary for the ascertainment of mineral contents in the minerals prospected. The first volume of the Geological Records of Travancore has been published, and for the first time in the history of the State, concession to work for minerals of commercial value has been granted to sons of the soil. The allotment to the Department of Industries including Geology has been increased from Rs. 97,798 in 1096 to Rs. 1,86,500 in 1098.

28. Banking.—Orders were recently passed detailing the ideas of the Government in regard to the character and the constitution of the proposed State-aided Bank for Travancore and specifying the concessions which the Government were prepared to make in aid of it, and the proposals of the Government were referred to the Economic Development Board for its further remarks. In these proposals, Government have expressed themselves in favour of a bank worked by an indigenous agency as a purely non-official concern, they being satisfied with only one Director on the managing board with no power to vote and the State aid taking the shape of a substantial deposit. Only such conditions as are necessary for effectively watching the working of the banks are proposed to be imposed. A Joint Stock Company will have to be registered for the purpose in Travancore with a capital of Rs. 30 lakhs, divided into 60,000 shares of Rs. 50 each. Subject to a maximum of Rs. 5 lakhs, Government will deposit an amount in the Bank equal to the paid-up capital of the Company for a period of 5 years, one-half of that deposit bearing no interest at all and the other half bearing interest at the low rate of 4 per cent. The capital of the Company has, to start with, been deliberately kept low with a view to enable the people of the State to float the Bank easily, and it may well be increased later when the operations of the Bank justify such a course. The further remarks of the Economic Development Board have just been received and final orders will issue as early as possible, after a careful consideration of those remarks. It is earnestly hoped that the people of Travancore would evince the necessary practical enthusiasm for the early inauguration of this Bank.

29. There has not been much perceptible improvement in the working of indigenous banking concerns in the State. The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies has severely criticised their methods and has even suggested legislative interference with a view to protect the public from the evils of unsound banking methods. Government, however, do not propose to take any immediate action in the direction

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